

Part 5: The Rural County



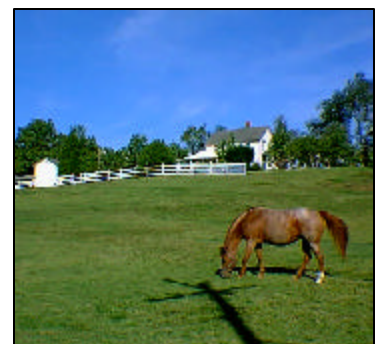
INTRODUCTION

Master Plan 2010 reinforces the goal of earlier master plans to protect agricultural and sensitive environmental areas of the rural county from development encroachment.

The urban-rural demarcation line (URDL) was established to provide a boundary between urban and rural areas. Land use and zoning reinforce this concept. Rural areas are defined as areas located outside the URDL that do not have public water or sewer service. The reliance on well and septic systems drastically limits options for development, and zoning and land use reflect the associated environmental constraints.

Rural areas receive only those levels of service necessary to protect the rural land management uses and to address basic public health, safety and welfare requirements of rural residents. Infrastructure is planned not to accommodate population expansion, but simply to address existing population levels and needs. In a rural area, it is expected that roads will be narrower and traffic slower, and that homes will be located further from schools. Medical facilities, stores, and other services and amenities will be located within urban areas, and to some extent, rural commercial centers. It is not cost-effective for the county to provide increased levels of service where population density does not justify them. Providing these services would also threaten the protection and preservation of important natural resources.

There are more than 66,000 residents living in the rural portion of the county. Residential development has proceeded at a fairly steady rate in recent years with an average of 443 residential occupancy permits issued annually since 1990. Land management areas that have been established for the rural portion of the county include agricultural preservation areas, resource preservation areas, rural residential areas and rural commercial centers. Each designated area has its own unique value, and will be discussed further in the section “Land Use in Rural Areas.”



Master Plan 2010 reinforces the goal to protect the agricultural and sensitive environmental areas of the rural county.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Economic development within the rural areas relates primarily to the agricultural industry and the commercial activities accessory to or associated with maintaining a viable agricultural industry. Other economic development interests include the commercial businesses in the rural area, particularly within the designated rural commercial centers and villages, recreation, and tourism. These economic activities are discussed in the Rural Land Management Section.

Approximately 100,000 acres or more than 25% of the land in the county is classified as agriculture use. The county's agricultural economy is diverse and contributes in excess of \$400 million annually to the county's economy. Large scale grain farming, equine operations, dairies, beef cattle and other livestock, vegetables, horticulture and specialty farms utilize approximately 78,000 acres (Table 1). The remaining lands are in commercial forests, hobby farms, and natural lands.

Table 1.
Major Agricultural Operations and
Extent of Land Cover (MDA, 1998)

Product/Activity	Acreage
Corn, grain	23,900
Wheat, oats, barley	9,500
Soybeans	16,600
Hay and silage	11,300
Vegetables	4,017
Fruits, nuts, berries	n/a
Nursery, greenhouse	n/a
Pasture	6,600



Agriculture contributes over \$400 million annually to the county's economy.

POLICY

- Recognize, foster, and promote agriculture as an economical, vital, commercial, and industrial activity that requires permanently protected productive land to function effectively.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Issue: Retention of Agricultural Land

First and foremost, in order to maintain agriculture in the county, productive farmland must be retained in large contiguous blocks to maintain a “critical mass” which is required by most commercial agricultural operations. To accomplish this goal, the county must maintain and strengthen multiple mechanisms that preserve farmland and foster agriculture. These include maintaining the Urban Rural Demarcation Line, increasing the permanent protection of productive lands through purchase of development rights and donation of development rights programs, and refining agricultural zoning and development controls to protect agricultural lands and to foster economic activities. Of these programs the permanent preservation of farmland is paramount. Agriculture cannot exist without a productive land base, and farmers and banks will not invest capital into agricultural operations without the certainty afforded by agricultural preservation. Landowners are also less likely to commit to long term leases with farmers or invest in important soil conservation practices. Alternatively, once the land is placed under permanent easement, a certainty exists that positively influences capital investment in agricultural operations. Other jurisdictions have used permanent easements as an attractive feature in marketing agricultural lands to agricultural capital ventures.

Tax provisions need reinforcement to continue to provide property tax incentives that maintain land in agriculture. The grain industry, which operates most efficiently on a large scale and is the largest agriculture industry on the basis of acreage (Table 1), depends on the availability of leaseable land to survive. In fact, the ratio of land leased to land owned is 3:1, with an estimated 3 acres leased to every 1 acre owned by a grain farmer. It is therefore important that owners of large amounts of productive land continue to receive tax incentives for leasing their lands to grain farmers and other legitimate farm operations.

Actions

1. Seek cooperative efforts with the University of Maryland to analyze existing agricultural industries and economic trends and continue to support agencies that supply information and services to the agricultural operators to assist in creating mechanisms that ensure the future of agriculture in the county.
2. Continue to monitor the relationship between large-scale producers and landowners who lease land.



Productive farmland must be retained in large contiguous blocks to maintain a “critical mass.”



3. Investigate incentives to retain land in agricultural production.
4. Maintain and strengthen the existing agricultural land use protections through adoption of maps in this master plan that identify agricultural preservation areas where agricultural uses are given preference.
5. Evaluate implications for the agricultural industry when making decisions that affect land use in the agricultural preservation areas.
6. Strengthen the agricultural zoning and development regulations to prevent the subdivision of productive land into parcels too small to farm.
7. Target at least 80,000 acres for permanent preservation through land preservation programs.
8. Continue to fund and increase the funding as feasible for agricultural preservation programs that permanently protect productive lands.
9. Improve the existing easement programs to expedite easement purchases that ensure the protection of the best productive lands.

Issue: Maintaining and Encouraging Diverse Agricultural Operations, Promoting New Agricultural Operations, and Marketing Agricultural Products

The county's agriculture industry is diverse and maintaining that diversity is critical to retaining the industry. Diversity enables the industry as a whole to better weather adverse economic conditions much like investing in a mutual fund helps spread risk and minimize losses.

The horse industry is the largest economic agricultural industry with estimated annual gross revenues of \$350 million. Nationally, the thoroughbred horse industry is very strong, with sales and breeding fees up. These strong increases are typically linked to the quality of the track facilities, promotion, and wagering handles (purses). Maryland's thoroughbred industry is at a crossroads. The county should support state efforts to improve racing facilities, promotion, and the overall health of the thoroughbred industry.



The horse industry is the largest single economic component of the agricultural industry in Baltimore County.

Although grain farming has been very profitable because Maryland is a corn deficit state (more grain is utilized here than grown here), there may come a time when grain farming is less profitable and it becomes necessary for farmers to shift to other products. Agriculture may have to adapt by taking greater advantage of its proximity to the urban and suburban areas. In addition to commercial marketing of foodstuffs locally, farms may also need more ancillary commercial activities to allow for the sale of farm grown goods directly to citizens. Examples of these activities include fall harvest festivals, farm days, and restaurants associated with wineries.

Another example is the pilot program “Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)” being run by the Department of Recreation and Parks at Cromwell Valley Park. In a CSA, a farmer directly contracts with citizens who may contribute labor and purchase “shares” of what the farmer grows.



More emphasis must be put on the marketing of agricultural products. Farm operations will need to obtain advice and support from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the University of Maryland Extension Service, and the county Department of Economic Development.

Actions

1. Permit ancillary activities to the farming operation that allow farmers to sell products grown on the farm directly to customers, and promote certain farms as a destination stop for tourists and visitors.
2. Ensure that county regulations provide flexibility in agricultural operations and enable them to adapt to changing economic conditions.
3. Work with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the University of Maryland Extension Service, and the county Department of Economic Development to assist farm businesses in marketing to new local, national, and international consumers to increase their economic contribution to the county's economy.
4. Support Farm Bureau educational activities such as “Agriculture in the Classroom” agricultural programs at Hereford Middle and High Schools, and a new mobile agricultural classroom.
5. Support the Farm Bureau program that identifies agricultural products produced in the county, which assists in the marketing of locally produced goods.
6. Promote measures that increase agricultural production.
7. Establish a program to assist young farmers in accessing capital to purchase farmland.

Emphasis must be put on the marketing of agricultural products.

Issue: Implementing Best Management Practices

Although agricultural use of the land is clearly better for the environment than paving it for development, farmers must be good environmental stewards. Maintaining land in agriculture and natural uses is consistent with county goals and the more recent state “Smart Growth” initiatives.

Farmers must implement best management practices on all the lands they farm, whether owned or leased. They must continue to implement measures to reduce soil erosion and adopt more aggressive measures to protect the



water quality of the county's streams and groundwater. Well-managed agricultural and natural lands provide significant quality of life benefits for the citizens of Baltimore County. The county is one of the few major metropolitan counties where rural lands can be found in close proximity to the urban and suburban cores.

Action

Assist the agricultural industry in implementing soil conservation, water quality, and nutrient management plans that protect the soil and water resources of the county.

Issue: Awareness of Agriculture as a Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Regardless of the type of agricultural operation, development and agriculture do not mix well. When housing is introduced into agricultural areas, land is taken out of production and the farmer is required to find other land to offset the loss. The introduction of housing creates more vehicular traffic on the road, which interferes with farming equipment, such as tractors or large combines. Residents may complain about dust, noise, odors, and machinery operated late at night or early in the morning. They are also suspicious of chemical use and this leads to conflicts, particularly with the grain industry, which uses chemicals in association with reduced tillage conservation practices.

Regardless of the type of agricultural operation, residential development and agriculture do not mix well.

The best strategy to address nuisance issues is to prevent the development of subdivisions in prime agricultural areas. Right to farm laws and related regulations and policies are essential to preventing agricultural operations from being driven out of business by new residents who have moved to the county's rural areas to enjoy the open space. Baltimore County is a leader in the state with regard to its agricultural zoning. Since 1990, the county has referred agricultural zoning violation complaints to the Baltimore County Agricultural Land Preservation Board for review prior to zoning enforcement action. Ultimately, the presence of houses adjacent to fields may lead farmers to change their type of operation, and thus incur higher costs. The farmer may have to plant hay instead of grain, carry higher insurance premiums, and lease land further away. For some farm operators this may reduce profitability to the extent that they must leave the industry.

Automobile drivers, bicyclists, and joggers must also be made aware of the need to be cautious and courteous on rural roads they share with oversized

farm machinery. Farmers often have to move large, expensive machinery from farm to farm using local rural roads. In many cases their machinery actually crosses over the middle of narrow rural roads into the path of oncoming traffic. While established rural residents are aware of the machinery and the need for caution, newer rural residents are often oblivious to the equipment. Methods should be instituted to minimize conflicts among these rural road users.



Actions

1. Expand provisions to inform all potential rural homeowners of agriculture operations that may affect them.
2. Develop standards that effectively buffer residential and commercial development from agricultural uses. Buffers should be provided on the site being developed. In those cases where agricultural operations are expanding, buffers should be provided on the agricultural property.
3. Develop methods to ameliorate conflicts between farm equipment and automobile drivers, bicyclists, and joggers.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

Within the rural county, the dispersed nature of the population makes it cost-prohibitive to provide the same level of community services and infrastructure as in the urban area. Among some residents who have moved into the rural area from urban areas, there is sometimes the expectation that the county should be providing the same level of service. The county will continue to provide basic education and public safety services in rural areas, but these and other infrastructure services will be scaled appropriately. Some social and cultural services will only be provided in urban areas.

The county will continue to provide basic education and public safety services in rural areas, but these and other infrastructure elements will be scaled appropriately.

POLICIES

- Provide basic educational and public safety services; governmental services will not be provided at an urban or suburban scale.
- Continue to support rural volunteer fire companies and to provide adequate water supplies in central locations for fire suppression.



- Maintain the rural character of the existing road network.
- Provide region-serving recreational facilities and acquire greenways for active and passive recreational uses that are compatible with rural character.

FIRE PROTECTION

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Issue: Strengthening Volunteer Fire Service

Rural volunteer fire stations are confronted with challenges that are usually not experienced in urban areas. The new, more affluent urban-oriented population moving into the rural areas brings high expectations for service, yet frequently these residents are unable to contribute time to assist in providing the service.

Actions

1. Continue to support volunteer fire companies through financial contributions, training, and technical assistance.
2. Assist volunteer fire companies with outreach and fundraising.

Issue: Providing Water for Fire Suppression

In the rural areas of Baltimore County, communities depend on “static” water sources for fire fighting activities. The ability to quickly establish and maintain effective fire streams for fire suppression has always been problematic in areas without fire hydrants. This difficulty is reflected in the differing fire insurance rates charged in these areas. Several in-ground water storage tanks have been located within rural communities, and specialized trucks that transport water have been purchased. In addition, several planning committees comprised of citizens and Fire Department personnel periodically update maps showing the location of useable water sources. Requiring new residential communities to provide either fire sprinkler systems or an approved water source would afford citizens a greater level of protection from property loss in the event of fire.

Actions

1. Work cooperatively with residents of established communities to locate or improve fire fighting water sources.
2. Ensure that new residential communities comply with appropriate requirements for rural fire protection.

The new, more affluent urban-oriented population moving into the rural areas brings high expectations for service, yet frequently these residents do not contribute time to assist in providing the service.

3. Pursue new technology to transport and use water more efficiently in rural fire fighting efforts.
4. Encourage the agricultural community to work with the Fire Department to locate and improve water sources on farmland.
5. Continue to work with developers and builders to place large capacity (30,000 gallon) tanks strategically in rural areas. These tanks or alternatives are required by the *Baltimore County Fire Code*.



TRANSPORTATION

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

The transportation system within the rural county largely consists of a road network that was developed at a time when all of Baltimore County was rural. In keeping with the rural tradition, these roads are usually narrow two lane roads without shoulders. They have not been engineered to improve sight distance or capacity, but rather hug the natural terrain. The rural quality of the road network reinforces and contributes to the rural character of the landscape. Newer rural residential development has resulted in the creation of subdivision roads, which are frequently wider than the rural road they feed into. In addition, commuters living in neighboring jurisdictions overburden roads that were never designed for such intensive use.

Issue: Managing Traffic Increases

The county's rural areas are subject to increased traffic due to development beyond the county's jurisdiction and its location between urban areas. Increasing the capacity of the existing local road network would result in erosion of rural character and could increase development pressure. Alternate solutions to this situation should be investigated.

Actions

1. Create traffic and road standards for rural residential areas. Include road widths, site distance, speed, and lighting. Consider solutions such as roundabouts, and turn-offs for farm equipment, rather than creating wider roads. Consider appropriate standards for pedestrian and bicycle access in association with rural road design.
2. Evaluate roads that serve as major traffic conduits to areas outside of the county's jurisdiction to determine what impact this traffic has on



The traditional road network reinforces and contributes to the rural character of the landscape.



the rural area. Work with the state, surrounding communities, and the adjacent jurisdiction to develop appropriate solutions.

Issue: Providing Appropriate Pedestrian Facilities

The greatest need for pedestrian facilities is in the urban area, accessible to the majority of the county's population. In the rural area, pedestrian facilities should be provided on a limited basis within rural commercial centers and rural village developments.

Actions

1. Incorporate rural pedestrian standards into the *Baltimore County Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies*.
2. Ensure that new commercial and village center developments provide appropriate pedestrian facilities.
3. Evaluate providing or improving pedestrian facilities at existing rural commercial centers.

RECREATION AND PARKS

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

The rural areas provide vital recreational opportunities and resources for county residents. Many of the county's major park systems are located within the rural county. State parks and facilities, such as Soldiers Delight, Patapsco Valley State Park, North Central Railroad Trail, Gunpowder Falls, and North Point provide vast tracts of land, primarily consisting of natural areas of truly unique value. County recreation and park facilities (other than those associated with school sites) include Oregon Ridge, Northwest Regional Park, Rocky Point, and Dundee Saltpeter. These parks provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for county residents. In addition, through the Metropolitan District, the reservoirs that include Liberty, Prettyboy, and Loch Raven and the forested buffers around them, which are owned by Baltimore City, provide both land and water recreational use that is governed by city regulations designed to protect drinking water quality.



The county's rural parks provide varied recreational opportunities and resources for county residents.

Issue: Providing Region-Serving Recreation

Actions

1. Acquire land within resource preservation areas for the development of compatible recreational facilities.

2. Strategically site compatible region-serving and special parks in order to meet the recreational needs of citizens in all areas of the county.
3. Continue to work with the state to expand and make better use of state parks.
4. Develop rural legacy proposals that incorporate in-fee or easement acquisitions that provide appropriate recreational benefit especially adjacent to reservoirs and the Chesapeake Bay.
5. Support and protect the cold water fisheries of Baltimore County.
6. Coordinate bicycle facilities with the state and county scenic route network.



Issue: Planning for Greenways

Greenways include 1) passive natural greenways that serve primarily as wildlife corridors and open spaces, and 2) active greenways that may include hiking, bicycling, or other recreational uses.

Actions

1. Create maps that provide distinctions between those greenways that serve as natural environmental corridors, and those greenways that may serve for active recreational use.
2. Identify potential trails, such as old railroad beds and suitable stream valleys, and acquire in fee or obtain easements for recreational use.

Issue: Developing Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle facilities in the rural areas should primarily provide recreational opportunities, although there may be opportunities to provide utilitarian options.

Actions

1. Examine rural areas for the suitability of providing county or multi-jurisdictional bicycle facilities along greenways, abandoned rail rights-of-way, or widened road lanes/shoulders. Work with bicycle clubs and other groups to identify major bicycle routes and make improvements to increase the safety and enjoyment of riding.
2. Coordinate bicycle facilities with the state and county scenic route network.
3. Adopt consistent rural design standards to ensure safety and provide a pleasurable and convenient bicycle environment.

The county will develop bicycle facilities in the rural area coordinated with the state and county scenic route network.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

The county's land management approach, which concentrates development and infrastructure in the urban area of the county, strives to protect the county's natural resources by limiting development in the remaining rural area. The county's commitment to ensuring environmental quality, protection, and management of natural resources is, however, generally the same in rural and urban areas. The emphasis in the rural area is on conservation of natural resources, in contrast to the urban area's emphasis on restoration.

POLICY

- Protect, conserve and restore all essential natural resources, with particular attention to groundwater.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

The county's rural natural environment encompasses a wide variety of resources, including wetlands, streams, reservoirs, forests, mineral deposits, groundwater, and the Chesapeake Bay. Managing these resources involves the same issues that are discussed in the Urban County-Natural Environment section of this plan. One additional issue that is primarily a rural one is groundwater protection because the population living outside the URDL relies on well water and septic systems.

Groundwater protection is an important rural issue because the population living outside the URDL relies on well water and septic systems.

Issue: Managing Groundwater

In Baltimore County, favorable geological conditions and plentiful precipitation combine to provide a valuable supply of quality groundwater that is used for agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses. About 10% of the county's population relies on groundwater as the primary source of drinking water. Approximately 30,000 wells are used to withdraw water for this use. In addition, there are currently 16 community well supplies in the county that each serve 25 or more users. The agricultural community also relies heavily on groundwater for domestic, livestock, and irrigation purposes. Industrial and commercial uses depend on groundwater to a more limited extent.

Demand for groundwater by well users occurs mainly in the northern half of the county in areas beyond the service area of the metropolitan water supply system. In order to protect the public health, it is essential to protect

groundwater resources from contamination by petroleum products, septic systems, fertilizers, pesticides, road salts, and industrial wastes. Under state regulations, the county is responsible for review of all well permits for residential, commercial and institutional construction. Standards exist to assure that all proposed drinking water wells provide a sufficient quantity of water and are below thresholds for bacterial and nitrate contamination. Proposed on-site sewage disposal systems are regulated to assure that wastes will be adequately remediated in the soil and that they are located at appropriate distances from wells.



The current standards for drinking water wells and on-site sewage disposal systems are considered to be effective in protecting public health and ground water resources. Failing septic systems occur primarily in areas that were developed prior to the establishment of these standards. In such cases, the county conducts sanitary surveys; if community health threats are documented in areas that are accessible to the metropolitan district, extension of public water and/or sewerage is provided on a long-term financing basis. In areas that cannot access the water and sewer service area, problems with private water and sewage disposal in small communities are hard to correct. Many rural areas, including the rural commercial centers of Hereford and Jacksonville, have limitations such as marginal soil conditions, small property sizes, area requirements for stormwater management, and zoning issues that impede improvements of sanitary facilities. In order to address these issues comprehensively, a mechanism such as a rural sanitary district can be established. Other groundwater contamination problems involve specific point sources of contamination, such as petroleum spills from gas stations. Federal regulations have resulted in a program whereby all service stations have replaced older tanks with new tanks that have enhanced protection and containment.

Over the past four years, the county has participated with the Maryland and U.S. Geological Surveys in the first comprehensive study of Piedmont groundwater quality in Baltimore County. Overall, ground water in rural Baltimore County was found to be of excellent quality for human consumption. No pesticides were detected above maximum contaminant levels, and 98% of all pesticides detected were at trace levels. Chloride levels in drinking water wells were found to be elevated above background levels in many wells, but were below the secondary maximum contaminant level. Road salt appears to be the primary source of elevated chloride in

The current standards for drinking water wells and on-site sewage disposal systems are effective in protecting public health and ground water resources.



wells, as evidenced by higher chloride levels in wells located closer to paved roads. Most of the trace elements with known adverse health effects (arsenic, antimony, cadmium, and cyanide) were not detected. Also, no adverse impacts to water quality were observed from waste discharges from residential septic systems.

Actions

1. Evaluate the need to revise county guidelines for approval of on-site sewage disposal systems.
2. Evaluate the concept of a rural sanitary district, with appropriate legal authority, financing, and design standards, to provide a mechanism for addressing rural water supply and sewage disposal problems.
3. Continue review of development proposals to assure the proper siting of drinking water wells and the location of on-site sewage disposal systems in accordance with the *Code of Maryland Regulations*.
4. Continue implementation of the 1993 *Ground Water Management and Protection Strategy*.
5. Continue to work with agricultural sector to implement practices that protect ground water sources.
6. Continue to educate homeowners concerning the proper use of residential fertilizers and pesticides.

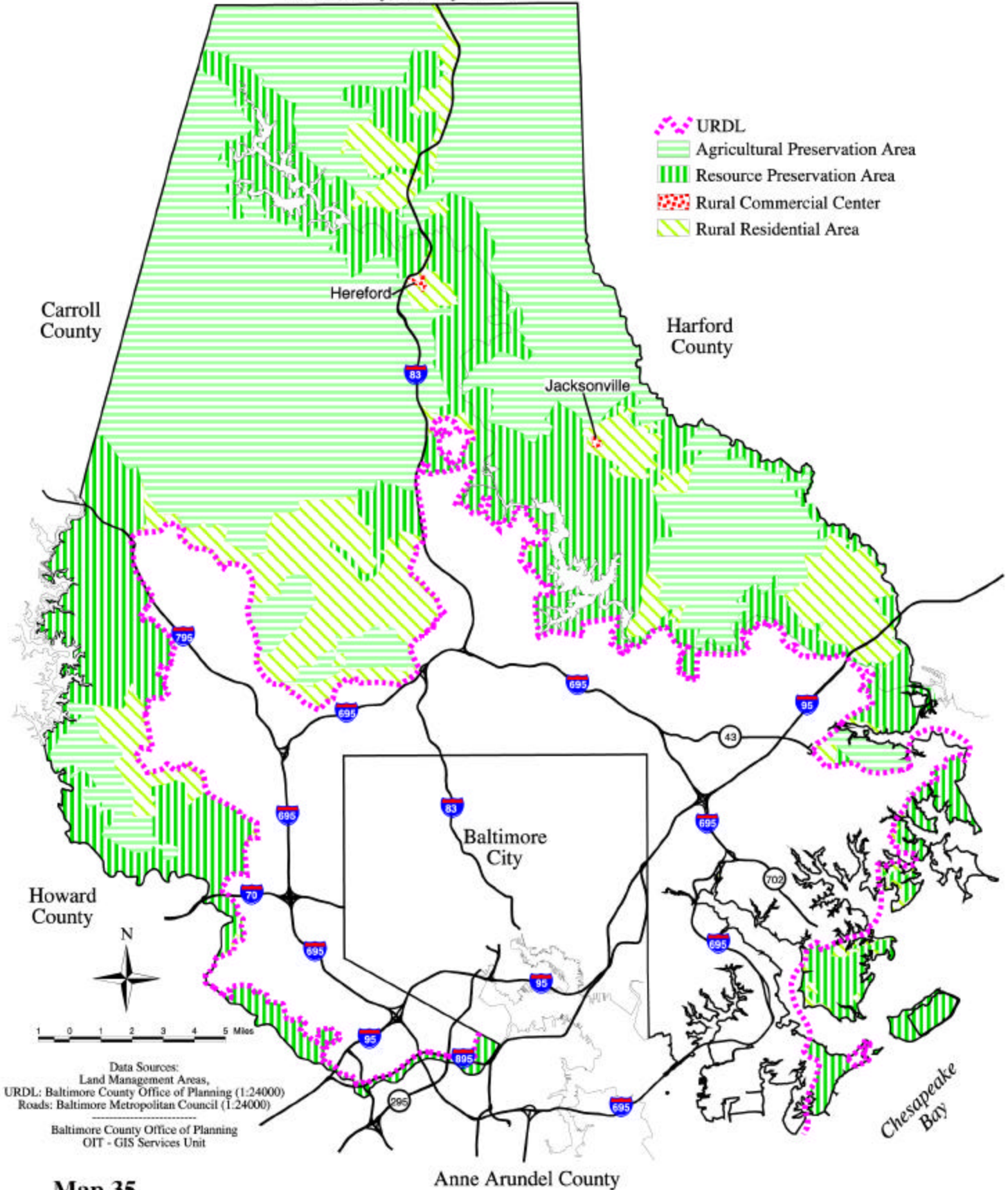
The rural portion of the county provides the economic benefits of agriculture and the unique quality-of-life benefits of cultural, historic, waterfront, and natural environment areas.

RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The rural portion of the county provides the economic benefits of agriculture and the unique quality-of-life benefits of cultural, historic, waterfront, and natural environment areas. Unless carefully controlled, demand for new development in the rural areas will overburden Baltimore County's ability to provide services and facilities, harm the agricultural industry, and significantly deplete environmental and aesthetic resources. Baltimore County's land management areas have been structured to balance supply and demand for all sectors of the economy and residents. In the rural county, the land management areas are: agricultural preservation areas, resource preservation areas, rural residential areas, and rural commercial centers. Each of these areas will be discussed in this section (Map 35).

York County, Pennsylvania



Map 35
Rural Land Management Areas



Rural Land Management Areas use zoning as the primary tool to direct and control development. Over the duration of the master plan, parcels of land in rural areas may be subject to rezoning requests. All rezonings should be consistent with land use concepts contained in the master plan. Additional tools for directing development, discussed in the following sections, include:

Agricultural Preservation District: By voluntary agreement with the state and county, the owner of eligible productive farm or forest land can establish binding restrictions for a minimum of five years (open-ended term) to prevent, absolutely, the subdivision or development of the land for nonfarm purposes. A district agreement is a prerequisite to an easement through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Land Preservation Easement: By voluntary agreement with the state, county, or private land trust, the owner of eligible productive farm, forest, historic, or natural areas can establish a permanent easement to prevent the subdivision or development of the land except as provided for by the easement agreement. Existing easement programs include the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, the Baltimore County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, the Rural Legacy Program, and various land trusts such as the Maryland Environmental Trust.

Land Trusts: Qualified conservation organizations are eligible to accept easements on land for the protection of farm, forest, historic, or natural features. A land trust must be qualified under ¶170(H)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for a landowner to be eligible for a tax deduction. In order to apply to the Rural Legacy Program as a sponsor, a land trust must also have a cooperative agreement with the Maryland Environmental Trust.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): The voluntary sale of the rights to develop a property by the landowner to a governmental agency or land trust. The sale price may be determined by an appraisal, formula, or mutually agreed upon method. The land is then restricted from development and subject to the easement conditions that typically include, at a minimum, requirements for best management practices that will protect soil, water, and natural resources.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): The possible creation of TDRs has been discussed for some time in Baltimore County as having potential for preserving rural areas. It is a process in which the unused density permitted to be developed on a piece of land is transferred to a different parcel. The development of a TDR program involves a detailed investigation of all possible alternatives and includes participation by affected properties. The designation of “user receiving area” in either the urban or rural portion of the county is the most difficult problem to resolve.



Rural Legacy Program: The state Smart Growth legislation established the Rural Legacy Program for fiscal years 1998 through 2002. The mission of the Rural Legacy Program is to protect and preserve areas rich in agricultural, forestry, natural and cultural resources. The state has structured the program to encourage local land trusts and local governments to prepare rural legacy plans that seek to protect significant and threatened resources. Through an annual competitive selection process, a limited number of plans are selected for funding.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AREAS

Agricultural preservation areas were created to protect the county’s agricultural industry, as well as its natural resources, and areas of scenic and historical significance. Designated areas include:

- Caves
- Greenspring
- Upperco/Worthington/Sparks
- Patapsco/Granite
- Parkton
- Freeland/Maryland Line
- Monkton/Whitehall
- Long Green
- Bird River

The 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture recorded 75,795 acres of farmland in the county, which represents a 9% decrease from the 1992 figure of 83,232 acres. Protecting rural resources has involved numerous efforts by the county and citizen groups. The most significant milestones are listed below.

- *Plan for the Valleys* written in 1963 by Wallace-McHarg Associates for citizens of Greenspring and Worthington valleys concerned about the impact of development in the 1950s.
- Donation in 1974 of first easement to Maryland Environmental Trust.



Agricultural preservation areas protect the county’s agricultural industry, as well as its natural, historic and scenic resources.



- Adoption in 1975 of resource conservation zones that included an agricultural zone.
- Adoption of the 1979 master plan that described the importance of protecting natural resources including agriculture, watersheds and the rural landscape.
- Use of the URDL as a planning line for the water and sewer master plan, and the creation of rural zoning classifications.
- Significant reduction of permitted density in the agricultural zone in 1980.
- Adoption and funding by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation of a PDR program, which provides an equitable tool for landowners permanently to protect rural lands.
- Adoption of the 1989-2000 master plan that reinforced the earlier planning and regulatory goals to protect agricultural land and rural landscapes.
- Adoption in 1989 of a development regulation to protect prime and productive soils.
- Adoption in 1994 of a local PDR program to supplement the state program.
- 1996 downzoning of 9,000 acres from RC 4 to RC 2.

Protecting agricultural lands must have two strategic elements: 1) development controls; and 2) permanent easement programs.

POLICY

- Permanently preserve lands for agriculture and avoid conflicts with incompatible uses.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

A successful effort to protect agricultural lands must have two strategic elements: 1) the county must have development controls to assure that agricultural resources are not developed; and 2) there must be effective permanent easement programs that meet the needs of landowners by assuring equity and preserving sufficient acreage to maintain a viable agricultural operation.

Issue: Revising Development Controls to Support Agriculture

Major subdivisions, defined as being greater than three lots, continue to occur in prime agricultural areas, threatening the viability of preserved

agricultural operations and the ability to preserve adjacent lands. The development of large institutional uses is beginning to change the landscape from one of rural character to suburban character.



Actions

1. Refine the boundaries of the agricultural preservation areas to include both adjacent farmland that should remain in agricultural use and natural buffers to reduce potential conflicts.
2. Consider designating the vegetable production areas on the eastern side of the county as agricultural preservation areas.
3. Reevaluate the zoning and development regulations applicable to these areas to determine the appropriate location and suitability of permitted uses, and to minimize the impact of even limited development on agricultural resources and farming operations.
 - Limit zoning uses to agriculture or agriculture support; other non-agriculture uses (institutions, golf courses) should be considered as special exception uses (subject to additional conditions) or as PUDs, with specific locational and functional criteria that first and foremost preserve prime and productive soils. Incorporate locational and functional criteria for house sites and lot size.
 - Include prime and productive/productivity soil standards and a maximum lot size.
 - Density should not exceed one dwelling per 50 acres. Explore ways to compensate landowners for additional density (if the underlying zoning generates higher density) through various easement or TDR programs.
 - Develop a PUD-RP (Planned Unit Development-Rural Protection) process that will allow large institutional, educational, religious, and recreational uses only through a planned unit development process. Designate areas suitable for the PUD, and create locational criteria and development standards.
4. In general, zoning changes made in the agricultural preservation area should protect the county's agricultural industry so that the area maintains its importance as an industrial base for the farming industry.
5. Consider the addition to Section 307 of the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations (special exceptions) of criteria requiring the evaluation of proposed development impacts on agricultural uses located on prime and productive soils.

The county will reevaluate the zoning and development regulations to minimize the impact of development on agriculture.



Issue: Preserving Agricultural Land through Preservation Programs

While zoning can be used to accomplish the objectives of rural area preservation, rezoning can occur every four years, and is therefore not permanent. Ultimately, the only way in which continued agricultural use can be guaranteed is through the use of mechanisms that guarantee, regardless of zoning, that specific lands will only function as agriculture-related uses. Permanent easements provide fair compensation to landowners. Additionally, agricultural lands in private easement stay on the tax roll. Map 36 depicts Baltimore County's rural preservation program areas.

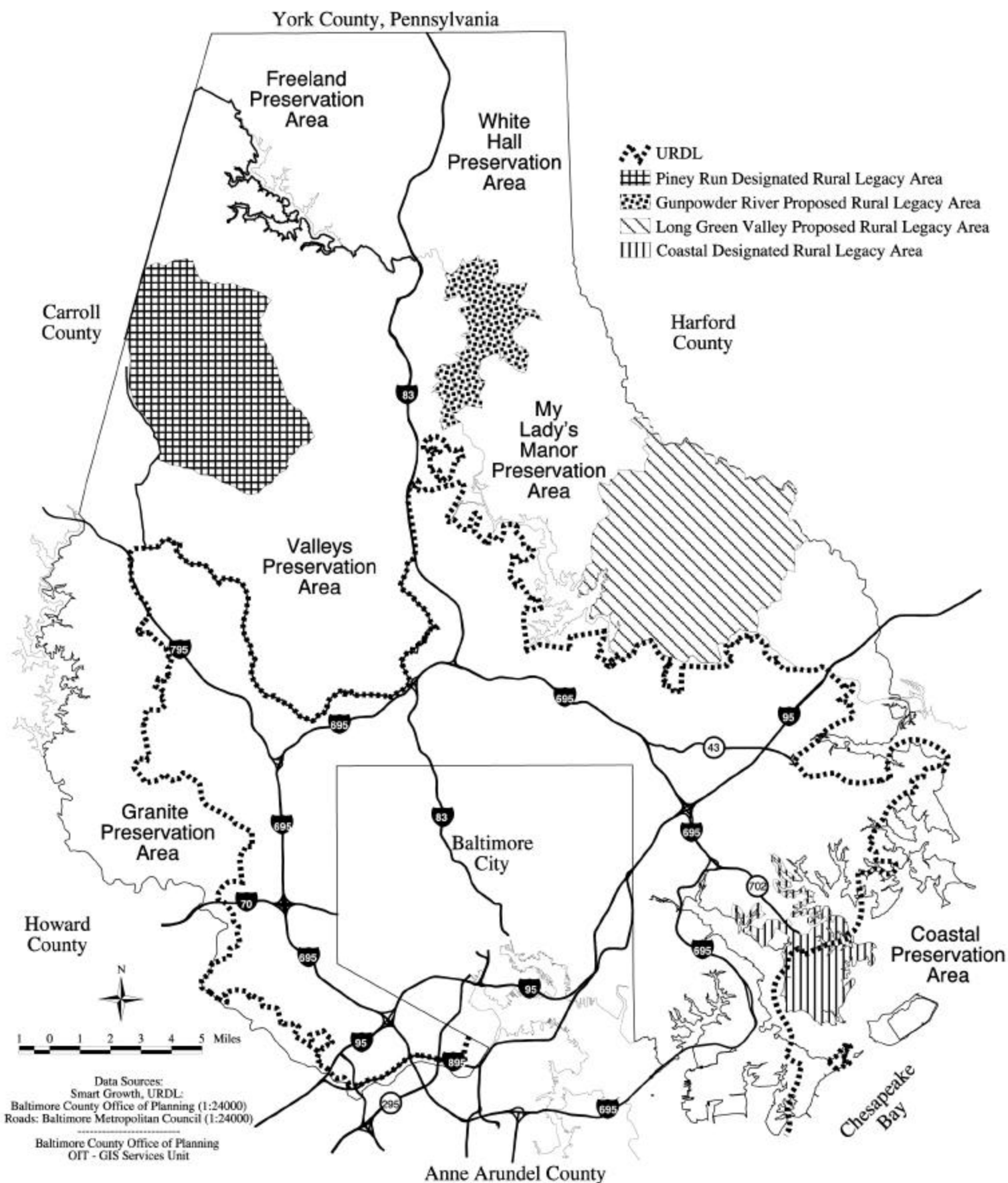
The purchase of easements, however, has not kept up with the demand of landowners willing to sell easements. This has in part been due to the economic declines the county experienced in the early 1990s but more significantly to its continued dependence on the PDRs through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. The easement programs are only just keeping pace with land development.

As of January 19, 1999, 27,438 acres of farmland and rural landscape have been placed in permanent easement (Table 1). The county and state have purchased easements on approximately 500 acres per year out of the 2,000 acres that apply. Fortunately, an additional 500 acres per year has been preserved through the actions of the private sector. Landowners who make conservation donations of development rights do so through the Maryland Environmental Trust or a local land trust.

***the only way
in which
agricultural use
can be guaranteed
is through the use
of permanent
mechanisms such
as preservation
easements.***

Table 1.
Accomplishments of Easement Programs through January 19, 1999

PRESERVATION PROGRAM	DISTRICT		EASEMENTS	
	number	acres	number	acres
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation	298	27,438	118	13,000
Baltimore County Agricultural Program	N/A	N/A	6	905
Maryland Environmental Trust	N/A	N/A	151	9,728
TOTALS	298	27,438	275	23,633



Map 36
Land Preservation Program



As indicated in Table 1, donated easements to the Maryland Environmental Trust play a key role in the permanent easement activity of the county. Baltimore County leads all other counties in the state in the number of privately donated easements. These easements represent the equivalent of millions of dollars donated to the county's easement program each year. Lands under donated easements contain more forests and streams than lands under purchased easements, but they still have, on average, 40% pasture and cropland. Private sector donors also play a role in recruiting other landowners to participate in easement programs. Five local land trusts encourage landowners to place their land in permanent preservation programs. They also hold easements in cooperation with the Maryland Environmental Trust, or outright.

Since 1982, there have been approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural land per year protected through permanent easements, and approximately 1,000 acres per year converted to nonagricultural use. If working farms continue to disappear at the current rate, there eventually will be insufficient agricultural resources available to continue to support the agricultural industry, and the rural landscape will be dramatically altered.

Actions

1. Delineate all areas to be targeted for long term preservation.
2. Actively pursue and promote easement and other programs designed to preserve agriculture.
3. Preserve 80,000 acres of agricultural land through permanent easements, either purchased or donated, and TDR programs.
4. Develop new revenue sources to support the increased funds required for farmland preservation.
5. Implement creative financing programs to increase the rate of easement purchase.
6. Provide technical support and seek input from local land trusts on preservation issues.
7. Investigate the use of a TDR program.
8. Implement rural legacy area plans.
 - Work with local land trusts to establish rural legacy boundaries, and with citizens to determine the potential level of commitment by landowners.
 - Develop partnerships with local land trusts to integrate into proposals all aspects of the county's resource protection elements such as forest buffer, Chesapeake Bay shoreline, forest habitat, endangered

If working farms continue to disappear at the current rate, there eventually will be insufficient resources available to support the agricultural industry.

species, and the aspects of the county's planning, growth management and zoning elements that reduce sprawl.

- Provide a financial partnership with the state for rural legacy area plans.
- Investigate using a TDR program that enables the county to hold development rights purchased through the Rural Legacy Program until such time as they can be sold.
- Adopt legislation that will allow the county to use an installment payment program to purchase easements, in the same manner as authorized in the county's Agricultural Land Preservation Program. By paying in installments, more county money will be available to purchase additional easements, and obtain matching state and rural legacy funds.



RESOURCE PRESERVATION AREAS

These areas are intended to preserve and protect the historic, cultural, recreational and environmental resources, while providing for a limited amount of residential development. Designated resource preservation areas include:

- Patapsco/Granite
- Gunpowder
- Chesapeake Bay
- Soldiers Delight
- Pretty Boy Reservoir
- Liberty Reservoir
- Loch Raven Reservoir

POLICY

- Preserve the county's valuable cultural, historic, recreational, and environmental resources by limiting residential development and acquiring available land for public benefit.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Issue: Preserving Land Designated for Resource Preservation

Resource preservation areas have historic, cultural, recreational, and environmental value to the region in general and Baltimore County in particular. These natural, environmentally-sensitive open spaces balance the intensely developed urban portion of the county. Large portions of these areas are publicly owned, such as Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area, Gunpowder Falls State Park, Patapsco Valley State Park, North Point



Land designated as resource preservation areas contain natural, environmentally sensitive open spaces.



State Park and the Prettyboy, Liberty and Loch Raven Reservoirs. As properties within or adjacent to the boundaries of resource preservation areas become available for sale, their acquisition as easements by entities such as the MET should be given priority by the county and state.

The majority of the land area within resource preservation areas (outside of critical areas) is zoned RC 4, which permits a residential density of one dwelling unit per five acres. For example, the owner of a 100-acre undeveloped parcel zoned RC 4 currently has the right to develop 20 single family residences at the current permitted density of one dwelling unit per five acres. The county should reduce the permitted density to be more in keeping with the intent of this preservation zone. If the permitted density is reduced to one dwelling unit per 50 acres, the owner could develop only two residences. However, if an accompanying TDR program is adopted, the owner could receive equity for the remaining 18 dwelling units, with nine of them transferred to a designated area, and the other nine purchased by a land trust.

Actions

1. Pursue programs for permanent resource protection.
2. Revise the zoning regulations to rename watershed protection areas as resource preservation areas. This definition will encompass cultural, historical, recreational, and environmental resources.
3. Use the following guidelines in evaluating rezoning requests. In general, resource preservation areas are intended to support a limited amount of residential development while still protecting the county's ground and surface water quality, forest resources, and significant plant and wildlife habitats. Zoning conversions that would increase the development potential of land within this management area are inappropriate.
 - Outside of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas, the current combination of RC 2 and RC 4 is the best zoning mechanism for achieving the management goals of this classification. Zoning changes that would permit additional residential density or increased commercial development should not be granted. It is especially important to avoid setting precedents that could lead to future upzoning by producing a change in the area's rural character.
 - The RC 20 and RC 50 zones in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area provide the best protection for these environmentally sensitive areas.



Resource preservation areas are intended to support only a limited amount of residential development.



Changes in zoning that would adversely affect the natural resources of the bay would be subject to possible disapproval by the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission and should not be granted. All zoning in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area should foster stewardship of the bay by providing the most appropriate land use, should ensure that impacts of development activity are minimized, and should preserve quality of life in surrounding communities.

- Requests for zoning changes that increase development densities in the Loch Raven, Prettyboy, and Liberty drainage areas should not be granted, in accordance with the county's commitments in 1984 and 1990 to the cooperative, regional Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement. Additionally, any zoning changes should be consistent with any applicable watershed study.
4. Complete detailed studies to determine the existing and potential residential densities in resource preservation areas.
 5. Limit residential densities to one dwelling unit per 25-50 acres. As part of the reduction of residential density, consider the use of TDRs to permit half of the allowable net density of a site in a resource preservation area to be utilized in a rural residential area, rural commercial center, or other designated area, with the remaining density purchased through a PDR program.
 6. Develop a PUD-RP process that will allow large institutional, educational, religious, and recreational uses only through a planned unit development process. Create locational criteria and development standards.
 7. Establish resource preservation area watershed priorities in order to upgrade environmental systems that have become degraded.
 8. Delineate and coordinate the public use of resource preservation areas for added recreational benefits.
 9. Develop and assist private organizations that enhance the public nature of, and care for, resource preservation areas.

***The county
will consider
using TDR'S to
limit residential
densities in resource
preservation areas.***

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The rural residential areas are a mix of single family residential development and woodlands, farm fields, stream valleys and areas of significant historic and cultural value. They have accommodated the bulk of new residential



development in the rural areas. Included in the rural residential land management areas are:

- Freeland
- Patapsco/Granite
- Kingsville
- Chestnut Ridge
- Hereford
- Jacksonville

POLICIES

- Limit new residential growth.
- Protect and maintain the area's rural character.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Issue: Limiting Suburban Development in Rural Areas

The 1979 growth management program designated rural residential areas as suitable for development. The 1989 master plan recognized some of the issues created by this choice. The majority of the land within these areas is zoned RC 5. The intensity of this development is a suburban residential development pattern with densities equal to one dwelling unit per 1-1/2 acres. Because this rural-suburban residential development is dependent upon well and septic services, the development pattern takes on a haphazard appearance and consumes large quantities of land. This type of development is in great demand, but it comes at a tremendous cost to the county in terms of traffic, increased infrastructure demands, and the disruption of the area's rural character. These demands on county resources directly compete with the needs of the established, urban areas of the county.



Rural residential development is in great demand, but it comes at a tremendous cost to the county.

Actions

1. Conduct thorough and detailed land use studies to determine: 1) buildable areas, 2) agricultural areas, 3) environmentally sensitive areas, and 4) appropriate areas for future rural village type development (see below).
2. Deny rezoning requests for additional office, business or industrial zoning in rural residential areas, unless recommended in an approved plan.
3. While maintaining some residential development density, consider developing a mechanism to allow building within these areas only if development rights are obtained through a TDR from an agricultural preservation area or a resource preservation area. Natural constraints that reduce buildout would not be affected.

4. Develop and adopt county standards appropriate for rural residential areas that include roads, open space, architecture, site layout, lighting, bicycles, and pedestrians.
5. Consider adapting cluster principles to maintain adjacent forests and open space, which help retain rural character.
6. Develop a PUD-RP process that will allow large institutional, educational, religious, and recreational uses only through a planned development process. Create locational criteria and development standards.
7. Provide effective buffers between development projects as required to maintain rural character.



Issue: Investigating a Rural Village Concept

The rural village concept should be investigated as a way to accommodate rural residential development in Baltimore County in a manner that is less intrusive to the rural character than current rural residential development patterns. This concept should be thoroughly studied to ensure that overall density is not increased. The present RC 5 and RC 4 cluster residential development zones were improvements over the pre-1976 (one house per acre) rural zoning; however, even this type of development is not in keeping with the rural character. In fact, most RC 4 and RC 5 development has met with increased opposition.

The rural village concept is a method of accommodating in rural areas residential and commercial development that is strictly limited in area, and compatible with the rural character. It concentrates small pockets of development, with a consistent rural scale and appearance, in specific locations so that larger agricultural or environmentally sensitive areas can be preserved. A mix of housing types and lot sizes is provided. Buffers, preserved in an easement program, surround the villages to prevent conflict with adjacent agricultural uses. The rural village concept should have specific design standards for all elements ranging from site selection and layout to building appearance.

The rural village concept concentrates rural development in small pockets, preserving larger agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

Two essential elements of the regulating mechanisms that need to be developed for a rural village concept are: 1) a properly drafted code, which spells out rules and procedures to produce desired results; and 2) illustrated examples to enable the reader to “see” the code as it comes to life on the landscape. The design principles must be adapted to the realities of modern



life, primarily the importance of the automobile, but in a way that does not cede total control to the automobile. Locational factors such as proximity to existing schools and roads should be considered. The economic and environmental feasibility of providing water and sewage service on site also must be addressed for any village development.

Actions

1. Investigate the feasibility of a rural village concept based on the following:
 - Map potential locations for rural villages within rural residential areas and rural commercial centers to minimize impact on agriculture and resource preservation areas.
 - Locate villages within proximity of adequate roads.
 - Create appropriate design standards.
 - Provide buffers between rural villages and agricultural uses.
 - Rural villages should not be located close to one another.
 - Set limits on the amount of density, and determine the appropriate mix of land uses for each rural village.
2. Determine the economic and environmental feasibility of providing water and sewage systems required for a rural village.
3. Investigate using the rural village as a receiving area for a TDR program, transferring density from an agricultural or resource preservation area.
4. Apply the program on a limited basis as a test case and evaluate its merits for rural preservation.
5. Allow rural village development as a PUD; however, this would be an optional, not mandated, approach.



Hereford is one of the two designated rural commercial centers.

RURAL COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Only two designated rural commercial centers will continue to provide local services and facilities for the surrounding rural area. They are:

- Hereford
- Jacksonville

POLICY

- The nature, size, and scale of rural commercial centers should remain geographically small, rural in character, and be regulated through a master plan process.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS



Issue: Managing Growth in Rural Commercial Centers

The two rural commercial centers contain a certain mass of retail and office service uses that should not be spread or repeated throughout the rural areas. These areas will continue to be the only locations within the rural area where such services will be concentrated. The size, scale, and quality of development have been a continuing issue in these centers. In addition, the ultimate buildout limits of these areas needs to be considered. These areas may also be suitable as places to transfer development rights removed from agricultural preservation or resource preservation areas.

Actions

1. Manage growth and development through the adoption of specific rural commercial center master plans that are regularly updated. The master planning process should determine the ultimate boundaries and buildout of these areas.
2. Undertake detailed studies to determine the appropriateness and capacity of these areas to receive TDRs, both commercial and residential. Any expansion of these areas should conform to a rural village concept.
3. Develop overlay districts or specific zoning classifications with design performance criteria that would be unique to each of the centers so issues such as use, size, scale and design are addressed. These centers have unique characteristics that should be enhanced by new development.
4. Adopt development performance guidelines and standards to ensure design quality, appropriate scale of uses, natural resource protection, appropriate buffers adjacent to agricultural uses, adequate open space close to homes, and pedestrian accessibility.
5. Provide infrastructure support such as stormwater management.
6. Develop a PUD-RP process that will allow large institutional, educational, religious, and recreational uses only through a planned development process. Create locational criteria and development standards.
7. Provide adequate buffers and transitions between commercial projects and differing adjacent land uses to maintain rural character.

Management of the growth and development in the rural commercial centers will be based on specific master plans.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas present special challenges for conserving historic resources. In urban locations, adequate protection for historic structures can usually be achieved by being attentive to the quality of design on the few acres of the structure's own site or perhaps on immediately adjoining property. Contiguous areas with a high concentration of significant structures (such as Lutherville, Glyndon, and Sudbrook Park) can be treated as a designated historic district, but even these have typically covered less than 300 acres.

In rural areas, structures usually derive their historic significance from their relation to the area's primary economic activity, agriculture, or to its ancillary elements such as mills, churches, or villages. There will typically be a cluster of functionally and visually related structures (dwelling, barn, springhouse, and other outbuildings) set in a bucolic landscape of fields, streams and woodlands. Thus, while the historic "setting" may be only a few acres for an individual structure in an urban area, or several hundred for an urban or suburban district, a rural historic district can encompass thousands of contiguous acres. Already in Baltimore County there are six separate National Register Historic Districts ranging from 1,500 acres (Caves Valley) to nearly 10,000 acres (Western Run-Belfast).

POLICY

- Conserve visually-integrated rural historic landscapes so that viewers can appreciate the enticing qualities of continuing rural uses, or of a bygone agricultural era, while still allowing reasonable use of privately-owned land.



Some of the county's rural historic districts encompass thousands of acres.

Issue: Coordinating Historic Preservation Activities with the County's Rural Strategy

It is more than coincidence that the county's historic rural areas, including Worthington Valley, My Lady's Manor, Green Spring Valley, and Long Green Valley, continue to be among its most desired places to dwell. The visual appeal of their relatively undisturbed agricultural appearance is uniquely satisfying, but that visual character is also especially fragile. New construction can be visible for miles; even a single inappropriately designed or sited new dwelling can dramatically alter the perceived sense of rural

character. To the extent that other elements of this master plan's rural strategy succeed in preserving land for agriculture and other rural uses, these landscapes can also be protected, through proper coordination.



Actions

1. Complete the comprehensive countywide inventory of historic resources, giving particular attention to documenting historic resources that not only meet cultural-history qualifications but also retain sufficient visual integrity to qualify as potential historic districts.
2. Protect off-site "viewsheds" in designated historic areas, including revisions to the development process.
3. Coordinate scenic route designation and design standards with rural historic landscape protection.
4. Integrate rural landscape protection with the designation and implementation of heritage areas and rural legacy areas.

SCENIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The county's scenic resources consist of scenic corridors, scenic views, and gateways. Most of the county's scenic corridors and views are located in rural areas. Gateways can occur within either urban or rural areas, and in fact, frequently occur at the boundary between urban and rural areas (Map 37).

POLICY

- Preserve and enhance the county's significant scenic resources as designated on the scenic resources map, including scenic corridors, scenic views and gateways, as an essential component contributing to the county's quality of life.

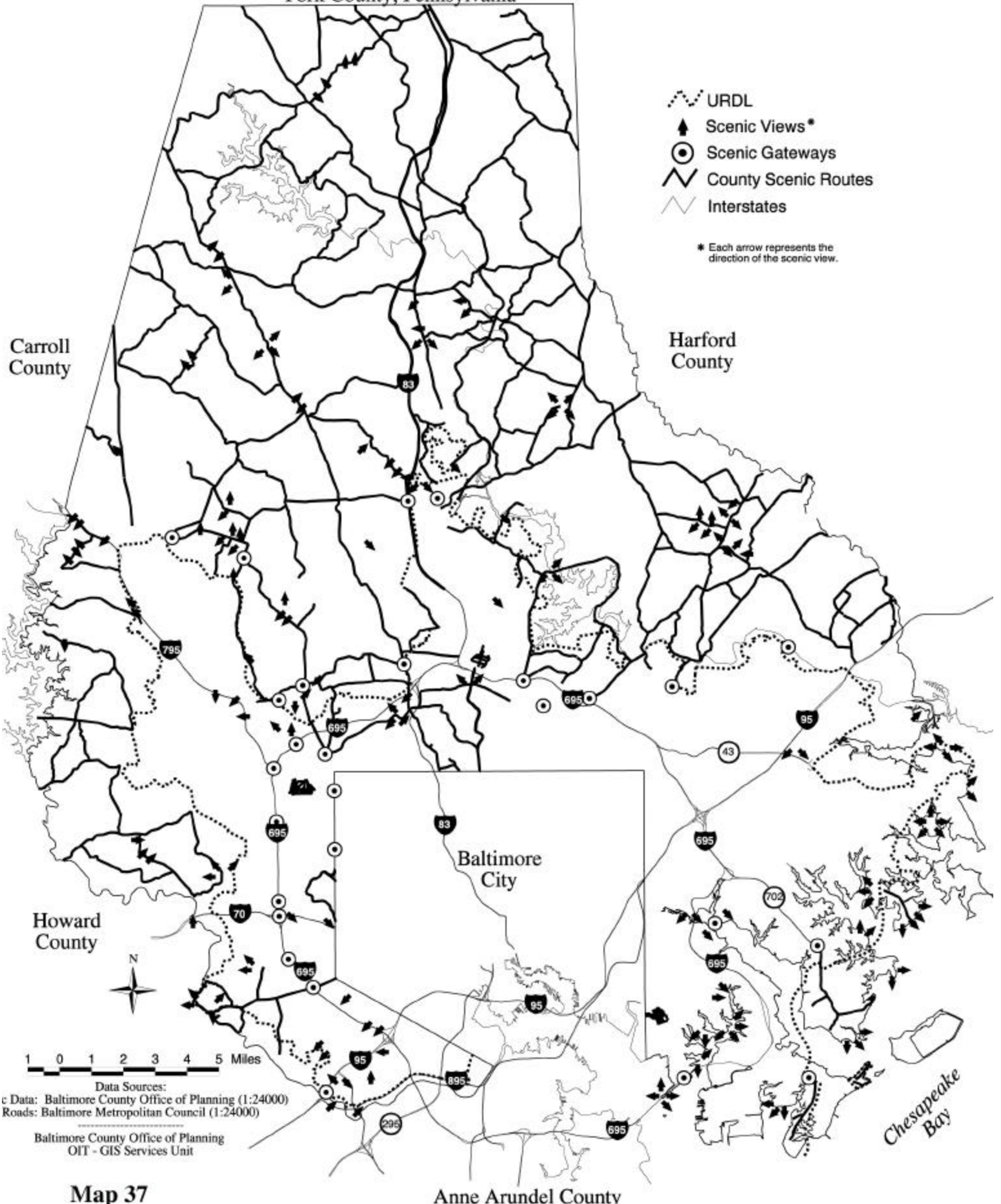
Issue: Preserving Scenic Corridors and Views

The *Baltimore County Master Plan 1989-2000* depicted scenic routes and views on the development policy maps, taking the first steps toward recognizing and identifying the distinctive visual elements that make Baltimore County so desirable to residents and attractive to visitors. The scenic views depicted do not represent a comprehensive county inventory,



The majority of the county's scenic resources are located in the rural area.

York County, Pennsylvania



Map 37
Scenic Resources

but rather a beginning that must be built upon. Following the adoption of the 1989 master plan, the county produced a series of scenic route maps for each councilmanic district that combined the significant visual and historical elements into self-guided scenic tours. In 1991, the county adopted a set of development guidelines to begin the process of protecting the county's scenic resources. These advisory guidelines have helped to raise the level of awareness and have recommended development alternatives that are sensitive to scenic issues, but they cannot assure complete protection of the county's visual resources.



The Maryland State Highway Administration is currently undertaking a statewide evaluation of its designated scenic routes. The National Byways Program, created through the "Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act" (ISTEA) provided the impetus, and some of the funding, for this endeavor. This program is continued in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA 21), 1998. The National Byways program can be used at the local level to assist in a variety of scenic preservation activities, including conducting scenic corridor management studies, which are required for nomination to National Byway status. Once a road is designated a National Byway, grants for preservation, enhancement, and interpretive activities can be sought.

Actions

1. Prepare corridor plans that specify management techniques for scenic resources.
 - Coordinate scenic resource identification and management practices with the Maryland State Scenic Byways Program and the National Road Program.
 - Establish criteria for inclusion and define levels of preservation or enhancement activities. Areas where significant public dollars for easements have already been spent should be identified and analyzed for scenic value.
 - Involve community organizations in the identification of scenic resources and planning for their preservation. Local public support for preservation activities is required for participating in federal programs.
2. Evaluate proposed improvements to state and county roads, bridges, and other infrastructure for their impact on scenic resources. Where public safety allows, the narrow and/or winding character of the road is part of the scenic experience and should be preserved.

The county will prepare corridor plans that specify management techniques for scenic resources.



3. Promote the county's scenic resources and encourage county residents to value them.
 - Frequently, scenic resources are intrinsically linked to historic and cultural resources. Promote activities that preserve these historic and cultural resources to aid in protecting scenic quality.
 - In conjunction with the county's tourism initiatives, revise the scenic route maps and include self-guided tours of significant scenic resources.
 - Consider a coordinated and nationally recognized and approved sign system of markers and plaques to identify and provide interpretation of scenic and historic resources.

Issue: Development in Gateway Areas

A gateway refers to the location where the area surrounding a transportation corridor clearly changes. Gateways are important elements of the county's visual fabric, contributing to the sense of the transition between urban and rural development and to community identity. Examples of urban/rural gateways include the entry to the Cromwell Valley from Towson north of the Beltway, and crossing the ridge northbound on I-83 past Shawan Road. Other existing gateways include crossing the Back River Bridge into Essex, and exiting from the Beltway into Towson.

The specific design treatment of development in these visually sensitive gateway area localities will vary greatly. The basic objective should be to emphasize the transitional character of the gateway, by strengthening the sense of arrival and/or unifying the distinctive character of each side. In some locations, it may be desirable to create gateways as a community conservation measure that promotes the identity of a particular community.



This entry into Towson from the beltway is an example of a gateway.

Actions

1. Identify additional gateways and formulate appropriate design guidelines as part of local community plans and streetscape projects. Provide general guidelines in the *Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies*.
2. For designated gateways, examine the design aspects of proposed development as part of the development review process.